



You are subscribed to Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission. This information has recently been updated, and is now available.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

3/18/2020

## **Oklahoma State Agencies Respond to Covid-19 Exposure**

March 18, 2020, Oklahoma City - Workers' Compensation Commission –

The Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission (WCC) and Court of Existing Claims (CEC) closed their hearing rooms and all administrative offices, initially for two days, March 16 and 17, and have now extended closure for the entire week of March 16. Further, both the Commission and the Court have stricken all scheduled hearing dockets for the week of March 16 through 20 in response to a potential exposure in their facilities to COVID-19.

“Our first priority is the health and safety of our employees and the public we serve. We have taken this action out of an abundance of caution, and in order to give the subject matter experts the time to study our situation and give us measured, rational, fact-based advice.” said Commissioner Mark Liotta, Chairman of the WCC.

**Timeline of Decision Making**

On Saturday, the WCC was made aware of a possible Exposure to COVID-19 in the Oklahoma City Offices and immediately contacted the State Health Department and The Governor's Office for Direction. The WCC notified employees of a possible exposure that afternoon and advised employees to take precautions and await further instructions until the individual's test results were communicated.

Once the WCC received notification late Sunday that the individual tested positive for COVID-19, Commissioner Liotta immediately informed the Executive Branch and contacted the Oklahoma County Health Department for their latest advice and guidance.

The WCC and CEC closed their agencies in OKC and Tulsa for two days to provide authorities time to consider and then evaluate the best next steps. An Alert was sent out to the Public and Employees with notification of the closure.

Since this decision was made, the evaluation has been completed, and the office will remain closed the rest of the week. The WCC also cancelled all docketed cases for the week of March 16 to greatly minimize the traffic in both buildings and limit potential exposure. Continuing operations will be re-evaluated and new information will be provided no later than Sunday, March 22.

"As facts were identified and confirmed, we focused on getting the information to the appropriate authorities and to our employees. We don't take this action lightly, and we know it will have an impact on the lives of injured workers and their cases. However, our immediate concern is to limit any exposure and reduce the possible spread of infection where we can." said Liotta.

## **Process Going Forward**

The Chairman has authorized the administrative law judges of the WCC to continue processing certain aspects of cases remotely, when possible. Once reopened, the WCC will utilize telecommuting for a small number of employees who logistically can work remotely. The WCC is coordinating with officials at the State Office of Management Enterprises (OMES) to ensure the Denver Davison Building is appropriately cleaned and safe for employees and the public. Other tenants in the building, including the Real Estate Commission and the Court of Civil Appeals, have been notified regarding the situation and the WCC's decisions.

“From the time we first heard of the exposure, through confirmation of test results, and initiating action, staff members made themselves available all weekend, and were responsive and calm as we responded to this situation. Coincidentally, just last Thursday, we heard a planned briefing from our Medical Director, Dr. Jay Cannon, and I met with our leadership Thursday and Friday to develop our plan of action if faced with this situation. We just didn’t expect it to happen the very next day.” said Liotta.

The WCC is a quasi-judicial administrative and regulatory agency in the executive branch which exercises the State’s judicial authority to adjudicate workers’ compensation cases. Its three commissioners currently employ forty-three staff members, including six administrative law judges (ALJ). Case dockets are randomly assigned to the ALJs in Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

The CEC is the judicial branch agency, which by statute is entrusted to hear older workers’ compensation cases, and currently employs eight employees under Court Administrator Dustin Davison.

For additional information, contact:  
Director of Communications and Administration  
Collin Fowler  
[collin.fowler@wcc.ok.gov](mailto:collin.fowler@wcc.ok.gov)

###



Stay Connected with Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission:

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:  
[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Unsubscribe All](#) | [Help](#)

---

This email was sent to Email Address using GovDelivery Communications Cloud on behalf of: Oklahoma Workers' Compensation Commission · 1915 North Stiles Avenue Suite 231 · Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105

